

# LAS VEGAS YOUTH COMMISSION



***MANUAL***

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## **THE COMMISSION**

The *Las Vegas Youth Commission* was established in 1998 to encourage greater youth participation in the community's development, and to foster a greater understanding of youth concerns and contributions. In order to achieve this, the *Commission*:

- ❖ Advises City Council on matters affecting youth.
- ❖ Makes specific recommendations for youth programs and activities.
- ❖ Serves as a forum for the expansion of ideas, needs, concerns, and goals relating to community issues, particularly as they affect youth.
- ❖ Makes recommendations to enhance the range and quality of recreational, employment, civic and social opportunities for youth.
- ❖ Enhance community wide participation by assuming the responsibility for resolving youth concerns in a coordinated manner with city council.

## **GUIDELINES**

- The *Commission* is composed of 13 youth ranging in age from 12-18.
- Commissioners are appointed by Mayor and Council after completing an application and interviewing with current Youth Commissioners. Commissioners serve a two-year term and may reapply and be re-nominated until they are 18 years of age.
- The *Youth Commission* meets at 6:00 pm every first and third Monday of each month at 140 Bridge Street. These meetings are open to the public, where both youth and adults are welcome.
- Changes in meeting date or time will be voted on by the *Commission*, or by administrative decision of the Advisor.
- Attendance is recorded at each meeting and the attendance policy is enforced: after three unexcused absences, a Commissioner may be considered for removal. Prior notification to Advisor or Student Advisor is considered an excused absence.
- A quorum consists of 2/3 of the *Commission* membership.

## **RECRUITMENT OF COMMISSIONERS**

- Las Vegas area youth, 12 to 17 years of age may apply for a Youth Commissioner position.
- *Commission* openings will be announced and applications are available on the City Website at [lasvegasnm.gov](http://lasvegasnm.gov) under Community Development.
- *Commission* members and at least one advisor share the responsibility of interviewing potential members.
- The interview process of the *Youth Commission* takes approximately 15 minutes, and consists of the following style of questions:
  - Describe your interest in serving on the *Youth Commission*.
  - What types of issues do you feel are important priorities for our community to address?
  - What do you know about local government?
  - What involvement have you had in the community?
  - If selected to serve on the *Commission*, what unique experience or insight would you bring to the community?
- After the interview, members make their selection for recommendation to Mayor and Council.
- All applicants are notified by phone or mail of the Commission's decision.
- The newly selected members are then officially appointed by Mayor and Council at the next convenient City Council meeting.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

**The** *Youth Commission* provides a strong link to the community's youth, and gives younger citizens a voice in policy and program decisions. Since actions and statements by *Commissioners* assume special significance, it is important that members function in a way that is beneficial to the City's best interests. Public statements should indicate that *Commission* actions are only recommendations to City Council. Statements to the public should contain no promises of action by the *Commission*, Staff or City Council.

**Youth Commissioners** are voting members and may reach decisions by consensus or a majority vote. *Commission* members communicate the group's purpose and goals to other organizations, and recruit ad-hoc members to assist in the *Commission's* charge. The meeting agenda is developed by the *Commissioners* to focus on their goals adopted for the year.

**Upon** application for and acceptance of appointment, *Youth Commission* members demonstrate their intention and ability to attend meetings of the *Commission*. If an absence from a meeting is necessary, *Commissioners* are requested to contact the Chairperson or support staff (Advisors).

## **OFFICIAL EXPECTATIONS**

- Commitment to attend ALL scheduled meetings of the *Commission*
- Individual conduct that will positively reflect upon the *Commission*
- Willingness to represent the *Commission* at public meetings/events
- Display strong leadership skills and work ethic
- Be a positive role model for the youth of the community

## **OFFICIALS**

### **Officers:**

The *Las Vegas Youth Commission* shall appoint officers based on a rotation system so that all members have the opportunity to practice skills of various positions:

- A. Rotating Chair:** This position will be filled by different members at each meeting. The person filling this position shall preside over the meeting of the *Commission* using Robert's Rules of Order as a guide.
- B. Secretary:** This is also a rotating position. The person filling this position shall record all business of the meeting including motions made, by whom; names of appointed committee members and other important information.
- C. Timekeeper:** This position is also a rotating position. The acting timekeeper will monitor the time at meetings so that agenda items are addressed in a timely fashion and that meetings do not last too long.

## **AD-HOC MEMBERS**

Ad-Hoc members can be any San Miguel County resident 11 years of age and older. These members provide an important communication link to area youth. They provide input on youth issues and concerns, and serve on sub-committees as needed. Ad-Hoc members are non-voting members and may serve as long as they like. Ad-Hoc members may be considered for *Commission* membership based on past commitment and participation in activities. Youth who are not selected as *Youth Commissioners* after completing the interview process may be invited to participate on the *Commission* as an Ad-Hoc member.

## **STAFF SUPPORT**

The Staff Liaison or their designee shall keep official record of the minutes in a journal for legal purposes. They also handle details of meetings such as: meeting room reservations, dissemination of agenda packets, and responses to requests for information.

## **COMMISSION LIAISONS**

Each *Youth Commissioner* selects a City Board or Commission to participate as youth liaison. Presently, *Youth Commissioners* are liaisons to:

- Keep America Beautiful Committee
- San Miguel County Detention Center Advisory Council
- San Miguel County Community State Police Advisory Council
- Tri-County Family Justice Center Advisory Board
- Recreation Department
- Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention



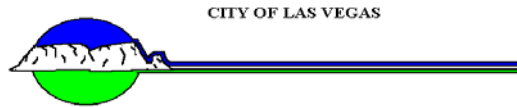
## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CONTINUING EFFORTS**

- **Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention** is a program in which *Commissioners* go into schools to help train students on suicide prevention. In addition they conduct community awareness at various community activities.
- **Positive Community Image** activities contribute to keeping a positive image of our community from alcohol signage to litter. The *Youth Commission* participates in city wide clean-ups and has conducted school and community presentations on Community Image. They have adopted an area next to the OK Café (*Commission* meeting place) which they have pledged to keep clean and do so twice a month.
- **Summer Fun Recreation** is a project in which the *Commission* is working with the Recreation Center and Meadow City Express to provide another alternative for youth in the community who may not have available transportation to recreational activities offered at the Recreation Center.
- **Policy Review and Development** is a task that the *Commission* as a whole may decide to do or a request may be made of them to review existing policies within local government.
- **Youth Advocacy** is done to assist other youth in the community learn how to have their voices heard in a productive manner.
- **Sustainability** projects and funding searches to financially support the continued efforts of the *Youth Commission*.
- **Legislation** activities including introducing and lobbying for Bills and Memorials. Participation in the New Mexico Legislature.
- **Youth in Government Training** with the support and partnership of the New Mexico Civic Engagement to provide information and tools to train other youth in the state to create a *Youth Commission* in their communities.

## **GOALS**

The *Youth Commission* addresses the issue of continuity by establishing goals for each year building on current ideals.

- **Prevention Efforts:**
  - **Suicide**
  - **Substance Abuse & Alcohol**
  - **Violence**
  - **Teen Pregnancy**
- **Develop informational presentations to assist other communities in development and implementation of their own *Youth Commission*.**
- **Peer Education and community awareness**
- **Continued community collaboration**
- **Continued collaboration with the New Mexico Civic Engagement.**



**City of Las Vegas Youth Commission**

**P.O. Box 160**

**140 Bridge Street**

**Las Vegas, New Mexico 87701**

**505-454-1401**

**[www.lasvegasnm.gov](http://www.lasvegasnm.gov)**